

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 /091 W

-----182325Z 123892 /66

R 181500Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6576

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

C O N F I D E N T I A L NIAMEY 1712

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, NG, CG, FR, MO

SUBJ: NIGER SUPPORTS FRANCE AND MOROCCO ON ZAIRE

1. DISPLAYING UNCHARACTERISTIC OUTSPOKENNESS ON A CONTENTIOUS AFRICAN ISSUE, NIGER HAS GIVEN FOURSQUARE SUPPORT TO FRENCH AND MOROCCAN ASSISTANCE TO ZAIRE. UNDERLYING THE GON'S MOVE ARE NIGER'S OWN SECURITY PROBLEMS AND LIKELY PRODDING FROM PARIS. IN THIS INSTANCE AT LEAST NIGER HAS PUT RELATIONS WITH ALGIERS AND RABAT IN BALANCE AND TIPPED TOWARD THE LATTER.

2. RESPONDING TO WHAT WAS PROBABLY A PLANTED QUESTION IN HIS PRESS CONFERENCE UPON RETURNING FROM NEW DELHI NACC APRIL 13, FOREIGN MINISTER DJERMAKOYE SAID TI
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WAS ENTIRELY NORMAL FOR ZAIRE TO LOOK TO ITS FRIENDS; ANY COUNTRY--INCLUDING NIGER--WOULD DO THE SAME. QUOTE WE DEPLORE THE INVASION OF WHICH ZAIRE IS VICTIM UNQUOTE, DJERMAKOYE SAID, QUOTE BECAUSE IT PUTS IN QUESTION TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF A BROTHER NATION AND WE HOPE ZAIRE WILL REGAIN PEACE AND NATIONAL UNITY. CONSEQUENTLY WE ENDORSE THE REQUEST MADE BY ZAIRE TO

MOROCCO AND FRANCE. WE APPROVE THE REQUEST ABSOLUTELY UNQUOTE.

3. ON APRIL 14, DJERMAKOYE REITERATED TO CODEL DIGGS THAT NIGER REGARDS ZAIRE SITUATION AS AN INVASION AND AN INTERNATIONAL PROBLEM--NOT, AS HAD BEEN SUGGESTED, AN INTERNAL AFFAIR. DJERMAKOYE TOLD DIGGS GROUP THAT PRINCIPLE INVOLVED IS FUNDAMENTAL AND THAT SECURITY OF MANY AFRICAN STATES WILL EVENTUALLY BE THREATENED IF AFRICANS AND THEIR FRIENDS MIS-INTERPRET OR IGNORE EVENTS IN ZAIRE.

4. AT RECEPTION FOR DIGGS LATER THAT EVENING, EMBOFF SOUNDED OUT DJERMAKOYE PRIVATELY ON REASONS BEHIND SURPRISINGLY DIRECT AND FORTHRIGHT STATEMENT ON ZAIRE. DJERMAKOYE SAID STATEMENT HAD BEEN CAREFULLY CONSIDERED. IT WAS TRIGGERED INTER ALIA BY NIGER'S CONCERN ABOUT ITS OWN BORDER PROBLEMS WITH QUOTE ITS TWO NORTHERN NEIGHBORS UNQUOTE. DJERMAKOYE REPEATED AND WITH EMPHASIS THAT PROBLEMS ARE QUOTE VERY SERIOUS UNQUOTE AND THAT THEY EXIST WITH BOTH NORTEHRN NEIGHBORS, I.E., LIBYA AND ALGERIA, AS WELL.

5. COMMENT. UNTIL DJERMAKOYE'S RETURN FROM NEW DELHI, FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS HAD TREATED ZAIRE ISSUE GINGERLY, HESITATING EVEN TO ENDORSE NIGERIAN MEDIATION EFFORT AND CONFINING THEMSELVES TO BLAND FORMULATIONS ABOUT AFRICAN CONSENSUS AND ROLE OF OAU. FRENCH EMBASSY SEEMS DELIGHTED WITH NIGER'S ENDORSEMENT ON EVE OF DAKAR SUMMIT AND WE WOULD ASSUME THAT IN ADDITION TO SECURITY REASONS DJERMAKOYE CITED, THERE HAS BEEN A FRENCH EFFORT

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WITH GON TO ENLIST SUPPORT. RUB-OFF FOR MOROCCANS IS ALSO POSITIVE. DJERMAKOYE'S PUBLIC STATEMENT TAKES PAINS TO SINGLE OUT MOROCCO AS COUNTRY FRIENDLY TO ZAIRE (AND BY IMPLICATION TO OTHER AFRICANS LOOKING FOR SECURITY AND STABILITY). NIGER THEREFORE SEEMS TO HAVE DISCOUNTED IN ADVANCE ANY ADVERSE ALGERIAN REACTION AND, AS INDICATED IN DJERMAKOYE'S REMARKS TO US, IS APPARENTLY AT THIS MOMENT MORE APPREHENSIVE THAN USUAL ABOUT WHAT ALGERIANS MAY BE DOING ALONG NORTHERN BORDER AND IN WESTERN SAHARA. QUESTION HAS AT LEAST BEEN RAISED WHETHER NIGER COULD NOW BEGIN TILTING FURTHER AWAY FROM ALGERIANS ON SAHARA PROBLEM. END COMMENT. JAMES

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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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